

Paper Matters – Chair & Speaker Biographies

Esma N. Akoğlu (Saray Sanat, Istanbul) is a classically trained *kaatı* artist from Istanbul, Türkiye. She has been practicing book arts since 2004 and has received training for *kaatı* (the art of Turkish paper-leather cutting), *tezhib* (illumination) and calligraphy from prominent masters, including Dürdane Ünver and Ayten Tiryaki who have been awarded Living National Treasure status by the Turkish government. Akoğlu is registered with the Turkish Ministry of Culture as a *kaatı* artist and has won an award for her work at the Turkish State Decorative Arts Competition in 2015. Today, she runs her studio, Saray Sanat, while continuing to train students. Classical book arts training requires the study of past works, therefore Akoğlu has made searching for unidentified works of *kaatı* and trying to unravel the techniques used in their making a part of her practice.

Hanieh Arjomand-Fard (LMU Munich) studied Informatics Games Engineering at the Technical University of Munich. She is working on multiple projects based at LMU Munich, for instance the T-MIGRANTS and GLOBAL DECO PAPER, where she is responsible for the database and supervises the website of the project. She worked at the chair of Professor Nicola Lercari at the Institute for Digital Cultural Heritage Studies. There she created a virtual 3D reconstruction and Digital Museum of ancient Helorus using Blender and Unreal Engine. Hanieh is currently enrolled as a PhD student in art History, where she is researching image curation through artificial intelligence.

Lily Baumeister (LMU Munich) has a bachelor's degree in art history with a minor in Economics. In the winter term of 2024/25, she finished her master's degree in art history at the LMU with the thesis "The 16th Century Shirazi Shāhnāmā Ms. or. fol. 359 at the Berlin State Library: Statistical Codicology and Analysis of Frame Breaking". She is currently enrolled in the Digital Humanities Certificate program and as PhD student in Art History studying frontispieces in Persian manuscripts through statistical codicology. Lily works as a student assistant for the ERC projects GLOBAL DECO PAPER and ARCHIATER.

Dr Nil Baydar (Conservation and Archive Department, Manuscripts Institution of Türkiye, Istanbul) is a conservator and codicologist specialising in Islamic manuscripts, book structures, codicology and preventive conservation. She is the founding head of the Conservation and Archive Department (Book Hospital) at the Manuscripts Institution of Türkiye, where she has led national programmes for the conservation, digitisation and preventive care of manuscript and archival collections across multiple libraries. Her research focuses on Ottoman manuscript bindings, material history and sustainable conservation strategies, with particular attention to large-scale collections in resource-constrained environments. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in Türkiye and abroad, combining institutional surveys with capacity-building and training initiatives. Baydar teaches paper and book conservation at university level and has published on manuscript materiality, binding structures and preventive conservation practices.

Dr Jake Benson (John Rylands Research Institute, Manchester) originally trained as a hand bookbinder, conservator, and paper marbler. He defended his doctoral thesis “The Advent of Abrī: The First Wave of Paper Marbling in the Long 16th Century” at Leiden University in 2024. The Arthur J. Houghton Library at Harvard University, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Aga Khan Museum, Getty Research Institute, and Juynboll Stichting, among others supported his research conducted in twelve countries. He is currently a freelance postdoctoral researcher for the GlobalDecoPaper Project to which he contributes his dissertation research. He shall also prepare a volume of primary sources on paper marbling in parallel translation. Jake is also currently the Soudavar Fellow for Persian Collections at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library at the University of Manchester, part-time, for which he contributes metadata on their manuscript holdings to FIHRIST, the union catalogue for Islamicate manuscripts, and to display alongside digital images in Manchester Digital Collections.

Dr Sebastian Bosch (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg) is a chemist specialising in the material analysis of written artefacts and cultural heritage objects. He holds a diploma and PhD in Chemistry from Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg. Since 2017, he has managed the CSMC Mobile Lab, coordinating non-invasive scientific investigations of manuscripts and other artefacts in collections worldwide. His research combines analytical techniques such as X-ray fluorescence, Raman spectroscopy, and multispectral imaging to identify inks, pigments, dyes, metals, and other materials and to reconstruct their production and alteration histories. He has contributed to interdisciplinary studies of papyri, palm-leaf and parchment manuscripts, paintings, maps, sculpture, and metalwork. His recent publications address ink analysis, manuscript pigments and dyes, medieval music manuscripts, portrait miniatures, and historical metal casting. He is also involved in the Palm-Leaf Manuscript Profiling Initiative.

Rita Capitani (Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence), after completing her master's degree in the Conservation department of the Academy of fine arts in Bologna and her training at the *Centre interrégional de conservation du livre* in France, furthered her studies at the *Istituto Centrale per la Patologia degli Archivi e del Libro* in Rome, where she studied the Yemeni manuscripts of the Sarnelli Collection. Since late 2018, after a period as a freelance conservator, she has been a senior conservator for the Italian Ministry of Culture. Until 2023, she worked at the *Soprintendenza Archivistica e Bibliografica dell'Emilia-Romagna* and at the conservation laboratory of the *Archivio di Stato di Bologna*. She currently works at the *Opificio delle Pietre Dure* in Florence, where she teaches at the School of Advanced Training and Study. She was a member of Emilia-Romagna's Crisis Unit and is involved in emergency management for archival and library collections.

Prof Dr Nuria de Castilla (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris) is Professor of the History and Codicology of Arabic Manuscripts at the École Pratique des Hautes Études–PSL in Paris. Her research focuses on Arabic manuscript culture, Qur’anic production and transmission in the Islamic West, and the Arabic manuscript collection of the Royal Library of El Escorial. She coordinated the ERC project *Saadian Intellectual and Cultural Life* (2016–2021) and has previously taught or conducted research at institutions including the CSIC, EHESS, the Warburg Institute, and Pompeu Fabra University.

Anita Chowdry (City Literary Institute, London) is an independent scholar, researcher, and visual artist living in London. She teaches Islamic Art History courses at the City Literary Institute in London and is also a practicing visual artist and designer. Over the last thirty-five years Anita’s work has extended to researching the physical aspects of Islamic manuscripts and Indian painting, looking closely at the handling and preparation of materials including pigments and gold, and deciphering the methods of designing, drafting, painting and decorating as practiced in the studios where they were made.

Dr Jaimee Comstock-Skipp (University of Oxford) is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and a Junior Research Fellow and Persian tutor at New College. She holds a BA in Near Eastern Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and master’s degrees in art history from Williams College and the Courtauld Institute of Art. She completed her PhD in Persian and Iranian Studies at Leiden University in 2022. Her doctoral research examined illustrated epic and biographical manuscripts produced for the Abu’l-Khayrids, with particular attention to diplomatic exchange between Central Asian courts and the wider Turco-Persianate sphere encompassing the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal empires. Her broader research interests include Persianate book arts, courtly exchange, and the circulation of manuscripts across regions. She has held visiting fellowships at the University of Oxford’s Nizami Ganjavi Centre and the Warburg Institute in London.

Amélie Couvrat Desvergnès (Independent Conservator and Researcher, France) specializes in Islamic and South Asian works on paper. In 2002, she earned her master’s degree in conservation from Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University. She has worked at several institutions, including the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar, the Louvre, the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. She has also taught in conservation master’s programs in Paris and Amsterdam, led short courses and workshops, and given lectures on the conservation and materiality of Islamic manuscripts, with a particular focus on paper—from its earliest production to the end of the modern era. She is co-author, with Willem Floor, of the book "History of Paper in Iran, 1501–1925", published in 2022. In addition, she has authored several articles in specialized conservation, scientific, and interdisciplinary journals and has contributed to edited volumes.

R. B. Davidson MacLaren (University of Hamburg) is Research Associate for Cultural Heritage and Coordinator of International Cooperation at the University of Hamburg. His work focuses on collection care and management, cultural property protection, heritage ethics, provenance research, the import and export of cultural objects, and Islamic manuscript studies. He also teaches and provides training in collection management and cultural heritage studies. Since 2018, he has coordinated the Kairouan Manuscript Project, a collaborative initiative dedicated to the preservation, documentation, and study of Kairouan's manuscript collections. In 2017, he was a Petra Kappert Fellow at the University of Hamburg.

Yana van Dyke (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City) joined the museum in 1999 after earning her MS in art conservation from The Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Specializing in the conservation of works of art on paper and parchment, Yana frequently liaisons with the departments of Medieval Art and the Cloisters, Asian Art, and Islamic Art. A recognized Professional Associate of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, a member of the International Council of Museums Committee for Conservation, and the Society of Winterthur Fellows, she is actively involved in both the U.S. and the international conservation community as an instructor, mentor, and author.

Prof Dr Negar Habibi (University of Geneva) is Lecturer in Iranian Studies, funded by the Mohammad Mossadegh Foundation. She holds a PhD from Aix-Marseille University, and her research focuses on premodern and modern Persian painting and the collection and reception of Persian art in twentieth-century France. Her publications include *'Ali Qoli Jebādār et l'occidentalisme safavide* (2018) and *Shāhnāmeḥ de Ferdowsi: Le livre des rois persans* (2021). In 2023, she edited an issue of *Manazir Journal* devoted to the idea of the just ruler in Persianate art and material culture. Her research also addresses pictorial production, female patronage, and artistic society in seventeenth-century Isfahan. In 2023–24, she was Visiting Professor at the École du Louvre in Paris. Her current project investigates Jean Pozzi's dispersed collection of Persian and Islamic art. She also serves as Persian-language Content Manager for *Khamseen*.

Prof Dr Kaja Harter-Uibopuu (University of Hamburg) is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Hamburg and Co-Spokesperson of the Cluster of Excellence "Understanding Written Artefacts." Her research focuses on Greek epigraphy, ancient legal history, the constitutional and administrative history of the Greek polis, and funerary law in Greco-Roman Asia Minor. Before joining the University of Hamburg in 2015, she studied and taught at the University of Graz and held research positions at the University of Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Dr Yan-chiuan He (National Palace Museum, Taipei) is Director of the Department of Calligraphy, Painting, Rare Books, and Historical Documents. He received an MA in Art History from National Taiwan University and a PhD in Art and Architectural History from Boston University. His doctoral dissertation examined the materiality, style, and cultural contexts of Northern Song (960–1127) calligraphy. He specializes in the histories of Chinese calligraphy, painting, and seals. His recent research focuses on the materiality, production techniques, and cultural interpretation of calligraphic works in the National Palace Museum's collection, with particular attention to expanding methodological approaches to the study of calligraphy. His monographs include *Materiality, Technique, and Calligraphic Style: New Perspectives within Style*. He has curated numerous exhibitions at the National Palace Museum, including *Painting and Calligraphy on Song-Dynasty Decorated Paper* (2018).

Paul Hepworth (Independent Conservator, Istanbul) is an Islamic Manuscript and Textile Conservator. He took his degree in art history and conservation from the Fine Arts Institute of New York University, where he specialized in paper and textile conservation. After studying Islamic paper in Istanbul on a Fulbright scholarship, he worked at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, with particular responsibility for its renowned Islamic manuscript collection. Returning to Turkey, he had numerous treatment projects with institutions such as the Topkapi Palace, Mevlana and various Vakıf Museums. He also worked for short periods as a conservation educator in countries throughout the Islamic world – Malaysia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq. He subsequently established a manuscript conservation laboratory at the Istanbul University Rare Books Library and another conservation laboratory for a private collector of Ottoman textiles and paper-based materials in Istanbul, while training conservators at both places. His research has been presented at many international venues and is published in various conservation journals.

Prof Dr Konrad Hirschler (University of Hamburg) is Professor of Islamic Studies and a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence *Understanding Written Artefacts*. A historian of the written word, he specialises in the medieval Middle East between approximately 1100 and 1500. His research examines reading practices, libraries, documentary and archival cultures, manuscript reuse, and the provenance and translocation of written artefacts. Further interests include Arabic historiography, the Crusades, and relations between marginal groups and mainstream society. His award-winning publications include *Medieval Arabic Historiography* (2006), *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands* (2012), *Medieval Damascus* (2016), and *A Monument to Medieval Syrian Book Culture* (2020). His more recent research investigates libraries and archives in medieval Jerusalem, the Qubbat al-khazna manuscript depository in Damascus, and the material and social histories preserved in manuscript fragments and annotations.

Elena Jakobi (University of Vienna) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History. Her doctoral research, supervised by Raphael Rosenberg, examines the art and cultural history of marbled paper in early modern Europe, focusing on its perception, circulation, use, and representation between 1550 and 1800. Drawing on printed and manuscript sources, she investigates contemporary discourses surrounding marbled paper as well as its reflection in other media, including painting and the graphic arts. She holds a BA in History and an MA in Art History from the University of Vienna. Her master's thesis explored the emergence, development, and differentiation of terminology used to describe marbled papers in the early modern period. During her studies, she completed internships at auction houses and currently works in an antiquarian bookshop. Her research interests include marbled and decorated paper, book studies, cultural and social history, and provenance research.

Negar Kazemipourleilabadi (LMU Munich) is a cultural heritage preservationist with an MA in Preservation of Cultural Heritage from Istanbul Kadir Has University and a BA in Conservation of Cultural Properties from the University of Islamic Art Tabriz. She has extensive experience conserving historical artifacts, including manuscripts, murals, textiles, and paintings, specializing in paper conservation within libraries and museums. Additionally, she has expertise in Ottoman Turkish translations of archival documents. Her work has contributed to preserving diverse cultural heritage sites and artifacts. As a multilingual, she is fluent in Turkish, Persian, and Azeri, with an advanced English proficiency and excellent reading skills in Ottoman Turkish. For this project, she is studying Ottoman decorated paper.

Prof Dr Marika Keblusek (Leiden University) is University Lecturer at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. Her research focuses on the history of early modern collecting, private libraries, visual culture, and cultural exchange, as well as looted art, contested heritage, and restitution. Her current project, provisionally titled *Paper Worlds*, examines the ethnographic and natural-history collections of Bernardus Paludanus (1550–1633). Drawing on inventories, *alba amicorum*, visitors' books, travel journals, and correspondence, it traces the collection's development and role within northern European networks of scholars, students, travellers, and merchants. She received her PhD from Leiden University in 1997 and has held research, curatorial, and leadership positions at Leiden University, the University of Amsterdam, the *Haags Historisch Museum*, and the *Rubenshuis* in Antwerp. Her wider interests include early modern court culture, heraldry, art crime, cultural memory, and museum history.

Susanne Krause (Independent Decorated-paper Specialist, Hamburg) is a decorated-paper maker, author, educator, and publisher specialising in European decorated papers. After training in book and paper conservation in the Hamburg workshop of Anne-Katrin Haase, she worked there for eleven years. In 1989, she began producing decorated papers serially and later established *Hamburger Buntpapier*, which she directed until its transfer to Dirk Lange in 2021–22. Her practice centres on the reconstruction and production of paste, sprinkled, and dripped papers using techniques and designs rooted in European traditions dating from the early seventeenth century. Her papers have been produced primarily for the conservation of library and archival collections, as well as for furniture restoration, bookbinding, and book arts. Through *Buntpapierverlag*, she publishes specialist literature on European decorated paper. She now focuses on teaching, masterclasses, and consultancy and, since 2025, publishes the annual journal *Irispapier: Buntpapiere in Forschung, Handwerk und Kunst*.

Prof Dr Uta Lauer (University of Hamburg) is an art historian specialising in East Asian art and written artefacts. Her research focuses on Chinese painting and calligraphy, inscriptions, copying practices, authorship, and the material and cultural histories of written works. Within the Cluster of Excellence *Understanding Written Artefacts*, she led the project *Valuating Handwriting in East Asia in the Digital Age: A Case Study in Japanese Calligraphy* (2022–25). She currently leads *Colophons on Chinese Paintings, ca. 1100–1900*, which examines the roles of inscriptions in the production, transmission, reception, and transformation of paintings. Her publications address Chinese and Japanese calligraphy, collaborative artistic production, copies and forgeries, and inscribed paintings. They include the monograph *Leaves Unfurl: The Iconography of the Banana Plant in Chinese Art* (2022) and studies of works associated with Wang Xizhi, Zhao Mengfu, and Guan Daosheng.

Yih-chuen Liao (LMU Munich) is a Ph.D. student in Art History at the National Taiwan University, specializing in Sino-Islamic exchanges by land and sea. She received her M.A. from New York University and read Islamic Art at Columbia University. She worked at the Brooklyn Museum and the Asia Society Museum, researched at the National Museum, New Delhi, and collaborated with cultural institutions in Xi'an on an exhibition depicting Tang cosmopolitanism at the National Museum of History in Taipei. She also holds LL.M.s from Columbia Law School and LMU Munich and previously worked in global affairs. For GLOBAL DECO PAPER she is researching and analysing the related East Asian materials.

Prof Huan-shen Lin (National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Douliu, Taiwan) is a conservator of East Asian paintings with extensive training in Japan and China. He holds an M.A. in Chinese Art History from National Taiwan University and received advanced conservation training at the Usami Shokakudo Studio in Kyoto, one of Japan's leading centres for traditional painting conservation, and at the Conservation Department of the Palace Museum, Beijing. He held positions in the conservation departments of the Kyoto National Museum and the Tokyo National Museum, where he worked on the treatment and preservation of East Asian works on paper. Since 2010, he has been a faculty member at National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Taiwan, where he teaches East Asian painting conservation. In 2011, he was designated a Preserver of Traditional Conservation Techniques under Taiwan's Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, in recognition of his expertise in historical mounting methods. His research encompasses traditional East Asian mounting techniques, the history of mounting practice in Taiwan, and the transmission of craft knowledge across East Asian conservation traditions.

Dr Anne Liewert (Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky) has served as Head of the Digitisation Unit and Subject Specialist for Early and Rare Printed Books since 2020. She studied Classical Philology and Protestant Theology at Kiel University, where she completed her doctorate in 2013. Following a library traineeship at the *Herzog August Bibliothek* in Wolfenbüttel, she worked on the Specialized Information Service for Classical Studies at the Bavarian State Library. From 2015 to 2020, she was Head of Historical Collections at the University and State Library Düsseldorf. At the Hamburg State and University Library, she oversees the digitisation of historical collections and currently directs three projects funded by the German Research Foundation devoted to the digitisation and digital accessibility of historical newspapers from German-speaking regions. Her work focuses on rare books, historical collections, digitisation, and the accessibility of cultural heritage.

Dr Henk Porck (Independent Researcher, The Hague) is a conservation scientist and paper historian specialising in the preservation, material analysis, and history of paper. Trained in biochemistry at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, he completed his PhD in biochemical genetics. In 1983, he joined the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, the National Library of the Netherlands, as a conservation scientist and, in 1991, became curator of its Paper History Collection. His research has addressed paper degradation, artificial ageing, mass deacidification, discolouration, ink corrosion, risk management, watermarks, and the identification and classification of decorated papers. Since retiring from the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* in 2016, he has continued to work internationally as a visiting researcher and lecturer in conservation science and paper history. His recent interdisciplinary research has also examined the material history and composition of early European book herbaria.

Prof Dr Robyn D. Radway (Central European University, Vienna) is a historian of Habsburg Central Europe and its imperial entanglements between 1450 and 1800. She is currently a Key Researcher in the FWF-funded Cluster of Excellence *EurAsian Transformations*. Her work combines art-historical approaches with source-based historical methods to examine administrative institutions, scribal practices, book and material cultures, military conflict, and Habsburg–Ottoman relations. Her award-winning monograph, *Portraits of Empires: Habsburg Albums from the German House in Ottoman Constantinople* (2023), investigates identity, mobility, and imperial belonging through manuscripts containing painted images, decorated papers, and *alba amicorum*. Her current research focuses on culture and administration in the Habsburg–Ottoman borderlands, including multilingualism, cartography, correspondence, seals, and scribal hands in Ottoman Hungary. She has also worked with several international museums and incorporates digital humanities and network analysis into her research and teaching.

Julia Rinck (German Museum of Books and Writing, German National Library, Leipzig) is an art historian and curator specialising in European decorated paper and paper history. Since 2020, she has curated the museum's Graphic Collection, having previously worked there in exhibition curation and public engagement. Since 2012, she has also taught paper decoration as a visiting lecturer at Leipzig University of Applied Sciences. Her research focuses on the production techniques, terminology, classification, and uses of decorated papers, particularly in relation to bookbinding and the graphic arts. She has catalogued and researched major historical collections, including the Felix Hübel Decorated Paper Collection at the *Deutsches Museum* in Munich, and contributed to the DFG-funded Watermark Information System. Together with Susanne Krause, she edited *Handbuch Buntpapier* (2021) and co-edits the annual journal *Irispapier*. She also provides scholarly lectures, workshops, publications, and expert assessments on decorated paper.

Prof Dr Ilse Sturkenboom (LMU Munich) studied Art History as well as Art History and Archaeology at the University of Groningen. After that, she did an MA in Iranian Studies at the University of Bamberg, where she also completed a doctorate. Following stints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the University of Amsterdam, and the University of Vienna, she took up a role as Lecturer in Iranian Islamic Art History at the University of St Andrews in Scotland in 2016. Ilse Sturkenboom joined the staff of LMU Munich in 2021 as Professor of Islamic Art History. She is particularly interested in Islamicate arts of the book and the exchange between Islamicate art and other cultures.

Marjana Uhde (University of Vienna) is an art historian and has been an employee at the Collection and Archive of the University of Applied Arts Vienna since late 2025. Prior to that, she worked at the Belvedere Museum Vienna starting in 2022, where she co-authored the catalog raisonné of Georg Eisler's paintings and, as an assistant for public program and community outreach, was involved in numerous programs. She has also worked at the Leopold Museum in Vienna and the Museum of Art and Design Hamburg, among other institutions. Her research interests include Viennese Modernism and the Wiener Werkstätte, particularly the relations between fine art, arts and crafts, and design around 1900. She is currently researching Carl Beitel's decorated papers in the context of the Wiener Werkstätte for her master's thesis.

Theresa Zischkin (LMU Munich) studied English and American Studies, Art History, and Classical Archaeology at the University of Vienna. Afterwards, she completed an MLitt in Art History at the University of St Andrews in Scotland and an MA in Arts and Culture Management at the Rome Business School. She worked as a research assistant at LMU Munich in 2021-2023, where she taught two undergraduate seminars in Islamic Art History as well as courses on research and academic writing. Theresa Zischkin is currently enrolled as a PhD student at LMU Munich and is researching Mughal decorated paper for GLOBAL DECO PAPER.